

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
ACDA-07 ARA-06 AID-05 EB-08 MC-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/102 W

-----231757Z 059389 /53

O R 231657Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9392

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 02841

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, BE

SUBJECT: ATTACK ON ZAIRE

REFS: (A) BRUSSELS 2741; (B) STATE 62267; (C) STATE 64155

1. VAN BELLINGHEN, CHEF DE CABINET OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER,
CALLED ME IN TODAY TO TALK ABOUT ZAIRE AND MADE THE
FOLLOWING POINTS.

2. BELGIUM CONSIDERS THE SITUATION TO BE SERIOUS. IT IS
HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE KATANGAN GENDARMES ARE SUPPORTED BY
THE ANGOLANS AND BY THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS AS WELL. THE
PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THE INCURSION IS NOT CLEAR. AT A
MINIMUM. THE KATANGANS SEEK TO TEACH MOBUTU A LESSON. AT
THE MOST, AND ONE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT HERE HOLDS THIS THEORY,
THE KATANGANS WANT TO TOPPLE MOBUTU. TO THIS END THEY
MAY ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE AND SEEK RECOGNITION BY OTHER
AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, BEGINNING WITH ANGOLA AND
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MOZAMBIQUE.

3. BELGIUM WANTS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST
FOR HELP. THAT IS WHY THEY AGREED TO SEND FORTY TONS
OF ARMS AND EQUIPMENT TO KINSHASA ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS.
THIS "COMMERCIAL SALE" IS BEING FINANCED BY A BELGIAN
GOVERNMENTAL LOAN. THE LAST PLANE LOAD FLIES OUT OF

BRUSSELS TONIGHT ON AIR ZAIRE PLANE.

4. THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS INCLINED TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO OUR REQUEST TO INCLUDE TWO MILLION ROUNDS OF 5.56 MM. AMMUNITION ADAPTABLE FOR M-16 RIFLES IN THIS SHIPMENT. HOWEVER, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY SAID THAT THIS CALIBER OF AMMUNITION WAS NOT IN ITS INVENTORY.

5. MOBUTU HAS BEEN TOLD THAT, IF ZAIRE NEEDS ADDITIONAL ARMS AND AMMUNITION, IT CAN PURCHASE THEM FROM BELGIAN COMPANIES BY PAYING CASH ON THE BARREL HEAD.

6. BELGIUM WANTS TO BE RESPONSIBLE IN HELPING MEET THE CRISIS IN ZAIRE BUT IS WORRIED ABOUT GETTING OUT IN FRONT. THE BELGIANS NOTED THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT SUPPLIED ANY ARMS OR AMMUNITION. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NATURE OF THE AMERICAN AND BELGIAN RESPONSES TO ZAIRE'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IS NOT YET A POLITICAL PROBLEM IN BELGIUM BUT COULD BECOME ONE IF ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

7. BELGIUM WANTS TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE U.S. AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENTS.

8. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT, I OUTLINED FOR VAN BELLINGHEN OUR APPRAISAL OF THE SITUATION AND OUR DESIRE TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP. I POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S. DID NOT WANT TO PROVOKE A SUPER-POWER CONFRONTATION IN AFRICA. RENNER

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